

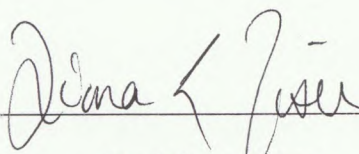
PERCEPTIONS OF HUMANITY: COLLEGE STUDENTS ON HOMELESSNESS

Emily Ann Burdett

Perceptions of Humanity: College Students on Homelessness
by
Emily Ann Burdett

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements of the Columbus State University Honors College
for Honors in the degree of
Bachelor of Sciences
in
Psychology
College of Letters & Sciences
Columbus State University

Thesis Advisor

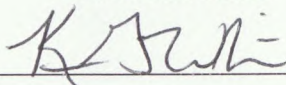


Date

12/15/14

Dr. Diana Riser

Committee Member

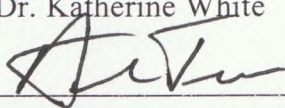


Date

12/15/14

Dr. Katherine White

Honors Committee Member

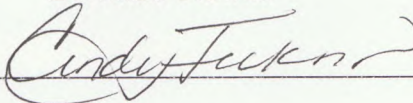


Date

12/15/14

Dr. Alan Tidwell

Honors College Dean



Date

12/15/14

Dr. Cindy Ticknor

Emily Ann Burdett

Columbus State University

Perceptions of Humanity **Abstract** *Students on Homelessness*

Initially focused on previous research regarding the demographics of the homeless population over the past three decades to develop a deeper understanding of issues homeless people face, a brief study was done to gather college students' beliefs regarding the homeless population and demographics of the students. It was found that ethnicity and political affiliation both had significant effects on students' perceptions of homelessness. Beliefs in the causes of homelessness were effected by political affiliation. Ethnicity affected scores regarding students' willingness to affiliate with homeless individuals. Social Dominance Orientation scores also correlated negatively with Distributive Justice Beliefs of Others. No significant difference was found in the mean scores of males and females across the sample population. A deeper understanding in the breakdown of students' ethnicities, political viewpoints, and perceptions of homelessness in our area allows for a better foundation for the creation of an educational program to increase activism and volunteer efforts regarding homelessness.

Homelessness is considered one of the most misunderstood issues in society since the 1980s (Kingree & Lavee, 1997). Before the 1980s while there were people without permanent housing, it was usually with the intention of keeping a nomadic lifestyle such as young men who left their mothers' homes when the family could no longer afford to feed them (Anderson, 1998). In the 1980s the term "homeless" was coined, its meaning was to differentiate the recently de-housed homeless citizens from the nomadic segment of society (Schneider & Remillard, 2013). Since the redefining of homelessness, the original meaning has long been buried under every various type of homelessness: unsheltered homeless, unaccompanied youth, chronically homeless, and many more (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). The burying of this differentiation leads to a muddling of the differences between

Perceptions of Humanity: College Students on Homelessness

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) of 2014, prepared for US Congress in October 2014, stated that in January of 2014, 578,424 human beings were homeless in the United States of America. One quarter of the homeless population were under the age of 18 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). The Census reports that in 2013 there were 316.1 million people residing in the United States. While homelessness did decrease 2% nationwide between 2013 and 2014, increases in homelessness occurred in 14 states, as well as in the District of Columbia (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). Homelessness is tied to decreases in cognitive abilities due to poor nutrition, and conditions that aggravate mental health (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2011; Pluck et al., 2012). Given the detrimental consequences of this social issue and the length and scope of its persistence, any research possible should be done to better understand traits behind its perpetuation.

Stigma

Homelessness is considered one of the most misunderstood issues in society since the 1980s (Kingree & Daves, 1997). Before the 1980s while there were people without permanent housing, it was usually with the intention of keeping a nomadic lifestyle: such as young men who left their mothers' homes when the family could no longer afford to feed them (Anderson, 1998). In the 1980s the term "homeless" was coined, its meaning was to differentiate the recently de-housed domiciled citizens from the nomadic vagrants of skid row (Schneider & Remillard, 2013). Since the redefining of homelessness, the original meaning has long been buried under every various type of homelessness: unsheltered homeless, unaccompanied youth, chronically homeless, and many more (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). The burying of this differentiation leads to a muddling of the difference between

“drifters” and “droppers” as they are referred to in one New Zealand article (Hodgetts et al., 2012). Drifters being chronically homeless individuals, often times, people in this category have other family members on the street, or spent a large part of their youth on the street to avoid abuse at home (Hodgetts et al., 2012). Drifters seem to be defined more similarly to the original hobos of the early 1900s when drifting was a way of life rather than a social issue (Anderson, 1998).

Droppers, however, are domiciled humans who, usually because of traumatic life events or bad markets, end up on the streets for a period of time (Hodgetts et al., 2012). These individuals tend to avoid drifters, keep to themselves, and try to continue following socially acceptable practices of daily life until a solution to their issue is found or things turn around.

One man, a dropper, talks about maintaining his harmony with society by spending his days in the library talking with others and staying up to date on current events (Hodgetts et al., 2012).

Two domiciled individuals, a librarian and a student, have no qualms with the homeless being in the library and completely understand why a homeless person would desire to be in the library (Hodgetts et al., 2011). They say their experiences with homeless visitors to the library have positively impacted their view of homeless individuals (Hodgetts et al., 2011). However, not everyone has had positive personal contact with the homeless, and in some situations, a lack of personal experience can lead to a more stigmatizing view (Hodgetts et al., 2011). One woman expresses her intense fear of homeless people, who she describes as “glue-sniffers,” but admits she has never had an encounter beyond being occasionally asked for change (Hodgetts et al., 2011).

These fears are perpetuated by misunderstanding and are common. Most Americans overestimate the number of people living in low socioeconomic situations; additionally they

inaccurately approximate the commonality of homelessness in every demographic area, while underrepresenting demographics that are very common in the homeless population such as single mothers (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). Another area in which the understanding of homelessness tends to follow availability heuristics, a tendency to assume the most memorable as the most frequent in place of fact, is the prevalence of mental illness. While the rate of mental illness is higher in the homeless population than in the general population mental illness is more often found to be a result of chronic homelessness than a cause (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2011). In a study of more than 4,000 homeless in Australia, only 15% had been mentally ill prior to becoming homeless. An additional 16% became mentally ill after their journey with homelessness began. Of the roughly six percent of the homeless population who became mentally ill after becoming homeless, it was found that 79% of them had been homeless for more than one year, and 50% had been homeless for two or more years (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2011). According to Johnson and Chamberlain (2011), after becoming mentally ill it is much more difficult to fall back in with conventional society; which could account for the perceived prevalence of mental illness in the homeless community.

Social Distancing

The seeming inability to correctly perceive homelessness goes a step further in the cognitive factors of social distancing. When brain imagery is used to observe differences in activity during interaction it is found that the medial prefrontal cortex is highly active when in-group society members are presented. When homeless individuals are presented activity in the medial prefrontal cortex dissipates and activity is shifted instead to the amygdala, the center of emotion (Harris & Fiske, 2006; Wisehart, Whatley, & Brihl, 2013). While this emotional reaction is not always bad, a potential sign of sympathy and compassion, it displays that even

on a cognitive level domiciled people are distanced from the homeless.

Social distancing leads to convoluted interpretations of the public's view on homelessness (Hodgetts et al., 2011). Claims have been made that the persistence of homelessness is causing compassion fatigue in those willing to help. Findings in a national survey claim otherwise. A majority of the national sample said they would be willing to pay more in taxes or otherwise provide support to build more shelters and pay medical expenses for the mentally ill (Link et al., 1995). Additionally, in the same national survey, participants claimed they would be willing to volunteer up to two hours per month at a local services center (Link et al., 1995). However, when asked about what attributes they regarded towards homeless people, they expressed fairly negative opinions such as a belief that they are lazy or that most homeless are drug abusers (Link et al., 1995). To the same effect, a plethora of anti-homeless laws have been passed in many metropolitan areas over the last decade without regard or riot (The National Coalition for the Homeless, 2006). These laws ban panhandling and make sleeping in public illegal. Even Atlanta, has passed a zoning law to prevent the construction of supportive housing inside city limits (The National Coalition for the Homeless, 2006). How can it be that a majority of the United States population is willing to help and yet, the issue has persisted for nearly three decades?

Behavior Priming

Priming relates to this study's goals of discovering a systematic method to increase students' interest in helping the homeless. Priming is when a subject is presented with a stimulus and then analyses are run, either at the same time with brain imagery software, or afterwards with surveys, to see if what the subject was exposed to influenced them (Molden, 2014). Priming is an area of much controversy in Social Psychology. With its basis being in

Cognitive Psychology, terms and methodology are still under examination in regards to behavioral priming (Ferguson & Mann, 2014). A common wording issue in association with behavior priming is the use of "unintentional" (Ferguson & Mann, 2014). In certain areas of studies, people are looking at whether or not subjects intentionally evaluate the prime. Behavioral priming regularly references "unintentional priming" in the sense that the subjects are unaware of the influences of the prime (Ferguson & Mann, 2014). This is different than the former reference in which the unintentional aspect was the stimulus and not the influence.

Priming effects have been hard to replicate over the past couple of years, most likely due to issues in methodology (Ferguson & Mann, 2014). However, another set of researchers, Higgins and Eitam (2014), voice that the effects of priming are best at merely increasing behaviors in which the subject would have already participated in or are already inline with one's values. In hopes of viewing a priming effect, whether from encouraging students to be more in tune with their preexisting desire to help or otherwise, students at the beginning of this study were presented one of two priming paragraphs. One in which a man seemingly is at fault for his own situation of homelessness, and another in which it appears fate was just not on his side.

Many other researchers have found success using educational programs to change students' perceptions of homelessness. Third year residents in a teaching hospital were assigned a course involving lectures, discussions, and tours of community programs (Buchanan et al., 2004). Findings resulted in the preferred outcome of residents increasing their number of volunteered hours with the homeless population (Buchanan et al., 2004). In a study at Valdosta State University in South Georgia, students were randomly assigned to watch either *Planet Earth*, or a presentation hosted by the National Coalition for the Homeless (Wisehart, Whatley,

& Briihl, 2013). The students exposed to the themed presentation likewise produced an increase in ATHI scores and displayed a higher tendency to donate food to the homeless (Wisehart, Whatley, & Briihl, 2013). In a long-term study by a professor at Bentley College, findings were again positive (Ostrow, 1995). Ostrow (1995) had students journal about their expectations before a visit to a soup kitchen, and then again after the visit as a reflection. When comparing the responses, he found that most students had misconceptions about both the appearances and the behaviors of homeless people, going into the volunteer activity. These students were humbled and more willing to serve again after their initial visit (Ostrow, 1995). While priming was chosen for this study due to time and budgetary restraints, there are hopes that an educational program will fruit from the body of this initial priming attempt.

Political Affiliation

A study by Wagstaff (1983) found that political affiliation was a reliable indicator on views towards the homeless. Attributes for causes of homelessness were more likely to be deemed as personal by political conservatives, rather than by political liberals (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). Furnham found that "left-wing" voters were more likely to make the attribution for homelessness to structural causes such as policy issues or lack of housing (1996). When people view the causes of homelessness as the fault of the homeless person, they tend to view homelessness less as a solvable issue (Kingree & Daves, 1997). Because of findings by Kingree and Daves' (1997) and Furnham (1996) relationships are expected between believed attributions of homelessness and self-reported political affiliations.

Social Dominance

Social dominance orientation is a diverse, and unique variable, which relates to many aspects of a person and is an accurate predictor of social and political action (Pratto et al.,

1994). Higher levels of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) are usually found in people who gravitate towards positions, politically and occupationally, that perpetuate hierarchical-legitimacy. Pratto and colleagues (1994) find that higher scores on this scale tend to belong to males, chauvinists, racists, and people who are sexist. Scores on the Social Dominance scale correlate with political-economic conservatism, social policy attitudes, empathy, and altruism. SDO is predictive of group discrimination and is highly capable of predicting future social and political attitudes (Pratto et al., 1994). Because of its relation to Political Economic Conservatism and its relationship to other scales used in a pilot study, it was used in this study. One of the expected findings is that SDO scores will be significantly affected by political affiliation.

Belief in a Just World

Belief in a just world; the belief that people get what they deserve (Webster, 1983), contributed to whether or not a person held society responsible for the existence of homelessness or whether it was perceived to be the fault of the homeless person's own life decisions (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). This variable is taken a step further by Lucas, Zhdanova, and Alexander (2011) who subdivided it into four subscales. Their theory covers Procedural and Distributive Justice Beliefs for the individual personally and towards others. Of greatest interest to this study is Justice Beliefs for others. Justice Beliefs about others are linked to negative opinions of people low on the socioeconomic scale and people suffering from mental illness (Lucas, Zhdanova, & Alexander, 2011). Distributive Justice Beliefs are shown to predict either harsh or pro-social attitudes: high procedural justice beliefs toward others predict benevolent attitudes such as altruism, whereas low distributive justice beliefs toward others predict out-group derogation and other harsh attitudes (Lucas, Zhdanova, &

Alexander, 2011). Because justice beliefs are expected to predict social behaviors, similarly to SDO scores, there is an expected relationship between high SDO scores and low Distributive Justice Beliefs of Others.

Empathy

In the interest of verifying Link and colleagues (1995) regarding a lack of compassion fatigue, this study will measure empathy. Partially to verify there is no significant difference in the scores between sexes, and to make sure participants are not scoring abnormally low on this scale. Low empathy scores could be a factor in low scores on subscales measuring willingness to affiliate with the homeless, and belief in the solvability of the issue.

Present Study

In Kingree and Daves' study (1997) they reviewed many different demographics and characteristics of Georgia State University students to analyze any significant relations between students who viewed homelessness as a solvable issue versus those who had negative views of homeless individuals. The present study is to some extent a replication of theirs, with revisions due to pilot studies. Their study found that ethnicity had a significant effect on scores regarding willingness to affiliate with the homeless (Kingree & Daves, 1997). This demographic relationship will also be reviewed in the present study. Additionally, Kingree and Daves' (1997) were successfully able to cause a change in students' perceptions regarding the cause of homelessness through exposure to essays biased towards either societal or personal attributes. This finding led to the use of a priming paragraph at the introduction of the surveys, and has an expected outcome of lower or higher total scores on the Attitudes Towards Homeless Inventory (ATHI) depending on which priming paragraph was generated.

In review, this study expects to find a priming effect on ATHI scores overall, a negative

correlation between SDO scores and Distributive Justice Belief of Others, a significant difference is expected in the desire to affiliate between white subjects and other ethnicities, and lastly, it is expected that political affiliation will have significance regarding what students attribute as the cause of homelessness. At the end of the day, the hope of this research is to create a systematic social intervention that would increase the belief that homelessness and other social issues are solvable.

Methods

The present study began in September of 2014 after Columbus State University Institutional Review Board approved changes to a pilot study. This study is part of ongoing research and meets requirements for completion of Columbus State University Honors College curricula. Survey Monkey was used to conduct the study. Students were presented with informed consent statements at the beginning of the survey; if consent was not given they were exited from the survey. If consent was given, participants were asked if they were currently pursuing higher education through a college, university, or technical school. If this question was answered in the affirmative, they proceeded to a prompt of one of two imagined situations, both in which a man named Larry became homeless (see Appendix). In one prompt, Larry became homeless due to mismanagement of finances, which was regarded as a personal cause of homelessness. Forty-nine percent of the participants received the first prompt through Survey Monkey's random assignment feature. The second prompt presented Larry as becoming homeless due to his children falling sick and losing his job due to excessive absences. This is considered an example of a traumatic life event or societal cause. The remaining 51% received the second prompt. After these prompts were given, participants proceeded to the first survey of the study.

Participants

One hundred fifty-eight students chose to take the survey, and after 66 were removed due to an error that led to a failure to exposure of the priming paragraph, 92 students were left in the dataset. The sample was 82.4 percent female; mean age was 22.12 ($SD = 5.34$). Seventy-nine percent of our sample was white and 6% identified as multiple ethnicities. African-Americans and people preferring not to answer shared a percentage of 4.5 each within the sampling population. The remaining six percent were American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, or Asian.

Procedures & Sampling

Participants in this study were contacted in various ways. Many students were contacted through Columbus State University distribution lists maintained by the Servant Leadership program, and the Honors College. Additionally, social media posts were made on Facebook, and the survey was posted on Psi Chi's webpage for student research. These posts were sent out with the intent that snowballing would occur and students would pass the survey on to other students they knew who were currently pursuing higher education. Due to this sampling method 60% percent of our participants were Columbus State University students. Approximately 10% were from other universities or colleges within the Southeast United States of America. Twenty-six percent of people who participated in the surveys earlier either did not complete the demographic survey or failed to answer this question. The remaining participants attended West Coast, Northern, or Online higher education institutions. Reasonable distribution across credit hour classifications was achieved with the majority of the sample (34%) having Junior status at their institution. Thirty percent of the sample was of Senior standing, 22% were Sophomores, and 13% were in their first year.

Measures

Questionnaires and questions were presented in a randomized fashion. Psychometrics of the questionnaires had shown that randomizing the questions made no difference in the outcome of scores. No identifying information was collected.

Social dominance orientation.

One of the surveys presented to the participants was the 16-item Social Dominance Orientation scale by Pratto and colleagues (1994). This survey is presented in 7-point Lickert scale, from 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive). It has questions such as “no one group should dominate society”(see Appendix). This scale’s scores indicate how likely a subject is to engage in social hierarchical legitimizing behaviors such as sexism and racism. The Cronbach’s alpha for the Social Dominance Orientation scale is .91.

Empathy.

Empathy of participants was gauged by a 14-item scale by Mark Davis as cited in Pursuing Human Strengths: A Positive Psychology Guide (2004). It is on a 5-point Lickert scale, ranging from 0 – 4 in which 0 “does not describe me well” and 4 “describes me very well.” The survey for empathy has questions such as “other people’s misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.” Questions 1 – 7 on this scale measure the ability to “walk in another’s shoes,” while questions 8 – 14 gauge one’s ability to be compassionate, and warm (see Appendix).

Procedural and distributive justice beliefs for self and others.

This survey is broken into four subscales with four questions on each: distributive justice beliefs of self, procedural justice beliefs of self, distributive justice beliefs of others, and procedural justice beliefs of others. Each of these subscales has internal consistencies above .75,

with procedural justice beliefs of self having the highest consistency of above .90. These scales have questions such as, "I feel I usually receive the outcomes I am due," and "other people usually use fair procedures in dealing with others" (see Appendix). The survey was presented on a 7-point Lickert, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This scale tells us how fair the subject thinks the whole is, which relates to many facets of personality, but for the purpose of this study, it is expected that only one of the four subscales will correlate with SDO scores.

Attitudes towards homeless individuals.

The Attitudes Towards Homeless Inventory (ATHI) is an 11-question survey, with an internal consistency of .71 (see Appendix). The ATHI is presented in a 6-point Lickert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree.) This survey has questions such as "low minimum wage in this country virtually guarantees a large homeless population," and "most homeless persons are substance abusers." This scale has four subscales: lack of belief in personal causes, belief in societal causes, likeliness of affiliation, and belief in a solution. Additionally, because of the inverse meaning of the "personal causes" scale, a high total score indicates a positive attitude towards homeless people.

Attributions for urban homelessness.

Attributions for homelessness were further gauged using a scale designed by Furnham with 45 questions (see Appendix). Statements regarding the causes of homelessness on this survey range from, "decrease in care for one another in today's society," to "cultural shift towards selfish materialism-the 'me' society" ranked on a 6-point Lickert scale from 1 (important) to 6 (unimportant.) Subscales of this questionnaire were divided by attribution and had Cronbach alphas ranging from .60 to .83. Subscales included structural ($\alpha = .83$), voluntaristic ($\alpha = .74$), individualistic ($\alpha = .81$), family break up ($\alpha = .70$), housing ($\alpha = .61$),

economic ($\alpha = .69$), value change, fatalism ($\alpha = .60$), education, and discrimination. Internal consistencies for value change, education, and discrimination could not be calculated as there were few items loaded to each subscale.

Results

Our sample was, as stated, majority female (82.4%), with a majority of the sample self-reporting that they were of middle class socioeconomic status (29.3%). Nearly 10% of the sample was lower class, 21.7 identified as lower-middle class, and 14.1% identified as upper-middle class. Not one of the students self-identified as upper class socioeconomic status. Political affiliation was normally distributed with 18.2% self-reporting on a projective question that they were democratic, 24.2% reported as republican, 19.7% reported as libertarian, independents reported as 21.2%, and all other responses were grouped into "other" which was 16.7%. Participants were also asked about their belief regarding their parent's affiliation, as is expected for our region, 56.1% reported their parents are republicans. Eighteen percent reported their parents are democrats and 6% reported their parents were one of each, democrat and republican. Three percent reported they believed their parents were libertarian, 7.6% felt their parents were independents, and 9.1 reported their parents as another political standing. Eighty-two percent of our sample population reported their sexual orientation as heterosexual, 11.9% reported as "other", while 3% was reported as homosexual, and the last 3% preferred not to answer. It is important to note that not everyone who filled out the surveys continued to the point of filling out their demographic information. The data above may not be representative of the persons who filled out surveys before the demographic questionnaire.

In regards to scoring on the scales they were given, SDO scores are the highest ($M = 5.90$, $SD = .96$) with the maximum possible score at 7. Empathy scores which ranged from 0 – 4

were averaged at 3.19 ($SD = .55$). Empathy subscales of Other's Perspective, and Warmth had means of 3.25 ($SD = .64$) and 3.20 ($SD = .45$) respectively. The subscales of Attributions of Urban Homelessness scored as follows: Structural ($M = 2.95$, $SD = .93$), Voluntaristic ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.23$), Individualistic ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .96$), Family Break-up ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.19$), Economic ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.12$), Housing ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.21$), Cultural Values ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.21$), Fatalism ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.03$), Education ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.30$), Discrimination ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.22$). ATHI total scores were 3.79 ($SD = .47$). Subscales on the ATHI had maximum possible scores of 6 and students' averaged as follows: Willingness to affiliate ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .76$), lack of belief in personal causes as attribution ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .95$), belief in solvability of the issue ($M = 4.56$, $SD = .76$), and belief in societal causes as the attribution ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.10$). Beliefs in a Just World that were divided into four subscales and had maximum possible scores of seven were 5.12 ($SD = 1.10$) for Distributive Justice Beliefs of Others, and 4.38 ($SD = 1.23$) for self. Procedural Justice Beliefs of Others had a mean of 3.96 ($SD = .86$) and for Self mean was 4.96 ($SD = 1.14$).

Initially in the interest of determining whether empathy needed to be controlled in further analyses, a comparison was done between the empathy scores of the males and females in the sample. Using an independent samples t-test, no significant difference was found between men and women with the mean scores being 3.13 ($SD = .57$) and 3.16 ($SD = .55$) respectively. This finding indicated that difference in empathy between genders should not have affected difference in scores on other scales in which empathy was a predictor. It also verified the expected finding that compassion had not become fatigued, an assumption also nullified by Link and colleagues (1994), as these scores are higher than average for the scale which ranges from 0 – 4.

The second hypothesis checked was if the priming paragraph, presented before the survey set, had any significant affect on overall ATHI scores. This was also done with an independent samples t-test. Results showed that there was no significant difference in the overall scores. Further analysis confirmed the lack of affect by the priming paragraph. Four attribution variables were run in a t-test: lack of belief in personal causes, belief in societal causes, individualistic causes, and structural causes. None of the mean scores displayed significant differences. Priming is a difficult effect to make use of, so these findings are not entirely surprising. As stated earlier, methodology is a large part in getting an influence with the use of primes (Ferguson & Mann, 2014). It may also be that with this small sample, and lack of variance in ethnicity and age an affect was less likely to be seen.

The sample was so diminished in terms of ethnic diversity that the sample was broken down into white and non-white, and a non-parametric Mann-Whitney was run to determine if any differences existed in willingness to affiliate with the homeless, a subscale off the ATHI. Participants who initially chose not to answer the demographic question were excluded. The test was not significant ($p = .42$) even with the recoding of all other ethnicities into a single variable. This is not surprising for such a skewed sample.

Taking the next step, a simple Pearson's correlation was done to see what would become of the expected finding regarding SDO scores and Distributive Justice Beliefs of Others. As anticipated, SDO scores and Distributive Justice Beliefs were negatively correlated ($r = .25, p < .05$). As expected, people with high SDO scores did not have high Distributive Justice Belief scores, indicating greater likelihood of harsh attitudes and policy behaviors. This verifies that SDO scores tend to predict behaviors that are not pro-social. People who have higher scores on Distributive Justice Beliefs of Others have a tendency to engage in more pro-social behaviors,

which is not what you would expect from someone with high SDO scores.

Lastly, a MANOVA was run to determine if self-reported political affiliation had a significant effect on any of the variables predicted by literature. The variables tested were belief in a structural cause for homelessness, belief in societal causes for homelessness, lack of belief in personal causes of homelessness, belief in individualistic causes of homelessness, and SDO scores. The test showed that there was a significant difference in the scores $F(5, 63) = 1.71, p < .05$. In review of the univariate analyses run, it appears that the significance was in regards to belief in societal causes $F(5, 63) = 3.90, p < .005$, and SDO scores $F(5, 63) = 2.62, p < .05$. When exploring the post-hoc Tukey HSD and Bonferroni for the univariate analysis on belief in societal causes in regards to political affiliation the only significance was found between republicans and democrats.

In the interest of exploratory analysis, all other self-reported political affiliations were excluded and a final t-test was done with the group divided by republican and democrats and the same variables from the MANOVA were run again. With the exclusion of the additional political affiliations it was found that there are significant differences in SDO scores, Societal Cause Beliefs, and Personal Cause Beliefs. This analysis showed that republicans ($M = 5.57, SE = .21$) had lower SDO scores than democrats ($M = 6.31, SE = .23$). This finding was significant $t(28) = 2.35, p > .05$. Societal causes also showed significant differences for republicans ($M = 4.10, SE = 1.03$) and democrats ($M = 2.53, SE = .25$) at $t(28) = -4.42, p > .001$. Lastly, a significance that was hinted at in the original MANOVA existed between republicans ($M = 4.34, SE = .19$) and democrats ($M = 3.53, SE = .98$) regarding a lack of belief in personal causes $t(28) = -2.45, p < .05$. These findings are interesting given they are the opposite of what was hypothesized.

Discussion/Conclusion

Findings in this study were not as expected, but very interesting. While the first hypothesis regarding the negative correlation between SDO scores and Distributive Justice Beliefs in Others was found, every other significance appeared muddled inside a sample that lacks variability. No priming effect was found, most likely due to poor methodological design, and small biased sampling. An ethnicity affect on affiliation was not found, most likely due to a majority of the sample being one ethnicity. However, interesting findings did then arise when time came to analysis political affiliations. While analyses run to look at all five self-reported affiliations showed little significance, further analysis identified a significant difference between the scores of republicans and democrats on SDO scores, and ATHI attributions of homelessness subscales. To make these findings more interesting, they are in the reverse of what literature says they should be.

Literature behind the social dominance theory states that conservatives should score higher on social dominance orientation and right-wing authoritarianism. In times where their political identity feels threatened, their SDO scores should rise as they solidify their group mentality (Dallago, Cima, Roccato, Ricolfi, & Mirisola, 2008). However, the mean age of this sample can explain these strange findings. Morrison and Ybarra (2009) found that in younger individuals, who tended to be less solidified in their own political beliefs, the relationship between SDO scores and political affiliation did not exist. Given the young age of this sample, and that a majority reported being raised in republican households, it is not shocking to see that their scores favor more towards the political interest group they were raised around, rather than the ones they have placed themselves in. Additionally, low SDO scores in republicans can be a sign that they do not feel their political identity is being threatened which is expected for the

Southeast regions of the United States (Morrison & Ybarra, 2009).

While these findings are unexpected, it is in the interest of this study to note that republicans hold the more accepting view of homelessness shown by Kingree and Daves' (1997) to correlate to belief in societal causes for homelessness. Paired with the low SDO scores found in our republican population, which indicates a hierarchical attenuating value, it is likely that the values the republicans in our sample hold will make them more gracious to our nation's homeless than the democrats within our study.

Implications & Future Directions

Results show that our students most likely do not hold strong negative views towards homeless individuals. This could be a result of the education they have received up to this point in their journey towards higher education. Although given the findings future studies on political affiliation regarding views towards homelessness should look at the religious identity of the sample. It may be that given our region, religion is having an effect on perceptions of homelessness that is stronger than political affiliation. Gathering a larger sample, with less biases would greatly increase the effect of any findings. Additionally, data should be collected on the subjects' history with homeless individuals. While it is important that educational programs to reduce stigma continue to be factual and clear about what causes a majority of people to end up homeless, increased exposure to current homeless individuals should not be disregarded either (Ostrow, 1995). Personal contact with the homeless helps people to better understand the diversity and scope of this issue and may assist interested individuals in discovering the niche in which they fit best in regards to solving this issue (Hodgetts et al., 2011).

While the homeless population may be just over half a million, in a population of 316.1

million, it seems odd to think that 316 million people cannot seem to find a way to end this horrible affliction of homelessness that half a million people are suffering from daily. Given that empathy scores are already at a reasonable level, perhaps increasing the belief that social issues can be solved would lead students to be more proactive in their communities. This shift could begin a movement to end the stigmatizing and socially distant role to which the homeless are presently subjected. Studies such as this one need to be repeated and deepened to see if there is a particular developmental or social engagement that is perpetuating the issues related to high social dominance and continuing hierarchical-legitimizing behaviors that seem to be fueling homelessness.

Ferguson, M. J., & Mullen, T. C. (2006). Effects of evaluation: An example of urban "social" priming. *Social Cognition*, 24 (Special Issue), 73-86.

Furman, A. (1986). Attributions for the causes of urban homelessness. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 11, 285-299.

Harris, L. T., & Pridgen, S. T. (2006). Dehumanizing the interest of the poor. *Academy for Psychological Science*, 15, 647-653.

Hodgett, D., Stoltz, O., Wilson, L. W., & Grant, B. (2012). On being alone or dropping into homelessness: A class analysis of responses to homelessness. *Antipode*, 44, 1268-1288.

Hodgett, D., Stoltz, O., Ratley, A., Lager-Cook, C., Grant, B., & Chamberlain, K. (2011). Near and far: Social distancing in stigmatized characterizations of homeless people. *Urban Studies*, 1709-1753.

Johnson, G., & Chamberlain, C. (2011). Are the homeless actually ill? *American Journal of Social Issues*, 46, 29-44.

Kingree, J. B., & Davis, W. F. (1997). Preliminary Validation of the Attitudes Towards Homelessness Inventory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 25, 265-285.

References

- Anderson, N. (1998). *On Hobos and Homelessness*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Buchanan, D., Rohr, L., Glick, S. B., & Jain, S. (2004). Changing attitudes toward homeless people. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 19, 566 - 568.
- Cozzarelli, C., Wilkinson, A. V., & Tagler, M. J. (2001). Attitudes towards the poor and attributions for poverty. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 207 - 227.
- Dallago, F., Cima, R., Roccato, M., Ricolfi, L., & Mirisola, A. (2008). The correlation between right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation: The moderating effects of political and religious identity. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 30, 362 - 368.
- Ferguson, M. J., & Mann, T. C. (2014). Effects of evaluation: An example of robust "social" priming. *Social Cognition*, 32 (Special Issue), 33 - 46.
- Furnham, A. (1996). Attributions for the increase in urban homelessness. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 11, 189 - 200.
- Harris, L. T., & Fiske, S. T. (2006). Dehumanizing the lowest of the low. *Association for Psychological Science*, 17, 847 - 853.
- Hodgetts, D., Stolte, O., Nikora, L. W., & Groot, S. (2012). Drifting along or dropping into homelessness: A class analysis of responses to homelessness. *Antipode*, 44, 1209 - 1226.
- Hodgetts, D., Stolte, O., Radley, A., Leggatt-Cook, C., Groot, S., & Chamberlain, K. (2011). Near and far: Social distancing in domiciled characterisations of homeless people. *Urban Studies*, 1739 - 1753.
- Johnson, G., & Chamberlain, C. (2011). Are the homeless mentally ill? *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 46, 29 - 48.
- Kingree, J. B., & Daves, W. F. (1997). Preliminary Validation of the Attitudes Towards Homelessness Inventory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 25, 265 - 288.

- Link, B. G., Schwartz, S., Moore, R., & Phelan, J. (1995). Public knowledge, attitudes, beliefs about homeless people: Evidence for compassion fatigue? *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23, 533 - 555.
- Lucas, T., Zhdanova, L., & Alexander, S. (2011). Procedural and distributive justice beliefs for self and others. *Journal of Individual Differences*, 32, 14 - 25.
- Molden, D. C. (2014). Understanding priming effects in social psychology: An overview and integration. *Social Cognition*, 32 (Special Issue), 243 - 249.
- Morrison, K. R., & Ybarra, O. (2009). Symbolic threat and social dominance among liberals and conservatives: SDO reflects conformity to political views. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 39, 1039 - 1052.
- Ostrow, J. M. (1995). Self-consciousness and social position: On college students changing their minds about the homeless. *Qualitative Sociology*, 3, 357 - 375.
- Pluck, G., Lee, K.-K., David, R., Spence, S. A., & Parks, R. W. (2012). Neuropsychological and cognitive performance of homeless adults. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, 44, 9 - 15.
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 741 - 763.
- Schneider, B., & Remillard, C. (2013). Caring about homelessness: How identity work maintains the stigma of homelessness. *Text&Talk*, 33, 95 - 112.
- The National Coalition for the Homeless. (2006). *A Dream Denied: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2014). *The 2014 Annual Homeless*

Assessment Report to Congress. Philadelphia: Abt Associates.

Wagstaff, G. F. (1983). Attitudes to poverty: The protestant ethic, and political affiliation: A

preliminary investigation. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 11, 45 - 47.

Weber, M. (1930). *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. New York: Routledge.

Webster, M. (1983). The belief in a just world: A fundamental delusion. *American Journal of*

Sociology, 5, 1048 - 1050.

Wisehart, C. G., Whatley, M. A., & Briehl, D. S. (2013). The effectiveness of the faces of

homelessness educational program on student attitudes toward the homeless. *North*

American Journal of Psychology, 15, 483 - 494.

Table 2

T-test results Comparing Empathy Scores

Empathy Scores	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Male	12	3.13	.57	-.18	65	.86
Female	55	3.16	.55			

Table 1

Descriptive as a Percentage of the Sample

Characteristics	Sample (<i>n</i> = 92)
Ethnicity	
White	78.8
Black or African American	4.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1.5
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.5
Asian	3.0
Multiple	6.1
Prefer not to answer	4.5
Gender	
Male	17.6
Female	82.4
Classification	
Freshman	13.0
Sophomore	21.7
Junior	34.8
Senior	30.4

Table 2

T-test results Comparing Empathy Scores

Empathy Scores	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	12	3.13	.57	-.18	65	.86
Female	55	3.16	.55			

Table 3

T-test results for Prime Effect on ATHI scores

Prime	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Fault	37	3.76	.48	-.56	77	.57
No Fault	42	3.82	.45			

Table 4

Correlation Results Between SDO and Distributive Justice Beliefs in Others (DJB-O)

	SDO
DJB-O	-.25*

Note. * indicates significance at $p < .05$